Recycling and Litter

**Objectives:**

Participants will:

* Be able to identify littering problems in their communities
* Understand the lifecycle of trash and recycling
* Identify what household items are recycled or can be recycled.

**Materials:**

* Photocopies of Newsweek article (optional)
* Note cards with interview questions on them
* Copies of text with statistics
* Prepared flip chart: ‘When Will These Things Decompose’
* A copy of the recycling symbol handout for each participant
* Flip chart paper or blackboard for brainstorming and making lists together
* Several trash items with recycling signs on them

**Application:**

Activity 1: Warm-up Interview: (10 min.)

Participants have 5 minutes to interview each other about litter in their towns.

Each person gets a question, which they ask another participant.

When both students have answered each other’s question, they must find someone who hasn’t yet answered their question, since there will be some repeats.

Questions for warm-up activity:

What kinds of litter do you see most often in your town?

Where do you usually see litter?

What is an environmental concern for residents of…..?

How do the youth of…. spend their free time?

How do adult residents of…. spend their free time?

How do you think trash collection and the litter problems in…. will change in the next five years? Will they get better or worse?

When participants are done interviewing, the class regroups, and discusses the answers. What is the same and different in each town? Do you think that these answers are representative of Ukraine in general? What can towns do to stop people from littering?

Activity 2: We all know not to litter, but is throwing everything away the answer to our problems? (20 min)

Read text as a group:

Throughout the world more waste is constantly being produced and these wastes pile up in landfills and dump sites. The U.S. generally disposes of more waste per capita per year than most countries in the world. More specifically, in 1970, Americans disposed of over 78.2 million tons of waste. In 1994 this figure increased to 95.6 million tons. Ukrainians throw lots of things away. In 1980 in Ukraine 240 tons of waste was produced per capita. This increased to 318 tons per capita in 1990, and 400 tons per capita in 1996. To give a more specific example, the Cherkasiy dump already holds three times the amount of waste that it was meant to hold, and it pollutes (poisons) the surrounding forest and Dnipro River.

Flip chart: “When Will These Things Decompose?”

Discuss: What do things need to decompose? Briefly say air, water, and light. Have participants post slips of paper with each item on the flip chart timeline next to how many years they think it will need to decompose.

Sum up:

Air, water and light are needed, all things that are limited because of landfill construction. In fact, landfills have so little air, it causes anaerobic conditions (without oxygen at all)! When you place food or other organic materials under anaerobic conditions, you get a by-product called methane gas, which is foul smelling and bad for the environment in large quantities. These are all good reasons why we should compost in our backyards and schools whenever possible.

What are some things that we can do with waste that are better for the environment?

* Burn it: But never burn anything plastic!
* Make something out of it: flower boxes, cardboard notebooks, etc.
* Other examples…
* Reuse!
* Recycle!

Activity 3: What is recycling? Can anyone draw the recycling symbol? (15 min.)

Hand out worksheets of the international recycling symbols and discuss what they mean. Hand out trash to each group and have groups identify what kind of recycling signs are on the packaging.

OPTIONAL IF YOU HAVE THE ARTICLE: (5 mins) Read the Newsweek Article: ‘Rooftop Revolution in Ukraine.’ March 27, 2006 issue.



Recycling and Litter: Additional Resources



